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RESULTS OF MICROSCOPIC EXAMINATION FOR HOOKWORM DISEASE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN RICHMOND COUNTY, VA.

By CH. WARDELL STILES, Ph. D., Professor of Zoology, and CHARLES G. CRANE, B. S., Assistant in Zoology, Hygienic Laboratory, United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.

At the request of Dr. A. C. Fisher, of Emmerton, Va., we have examined microscopically all of the pupils (white), 39 in number, of one of the public schools in the Washington district, Richmond County, Va., to determine the frequency of hookworm infection.

Of these 39 children (23 boys, 16 girls), 37 pupils, or 94.8 per cent harbor hookworms, as demonstrated microscopically by finding the eggs. The 2 negative cases are children from Washington, D. C., who moved to the county only last fall.

Blank cards were furnished to Doctor Fisher for certain data in connection with each child. From these cards the following information has been tabulated:

Actual and apparent age.—The actual age of the pupils varies from 7 to 17 years. Of the 21 boys showing infection, 11 pupils, or 52.3 per cent, were judged by Doctor Fisher as appearing younger than they actually are, that is to say they are underdeveloped for their age. The total actual age for the 21 male cases is 243 years, giving an average of 11.5 years; their total apparent age is 221 years, giving an average of 10.5 years; thus they average 1 year in underdevelopment; this underdevelopment is given as 1 year for 4 boys, 2 years for 3 boys, and 3 years for 4 boys.

Of the 16 girls, 6 pupils, or 37.5 per cent, were judged as apparently younger than they actually are; their total actual age is 199.6 years, giving an average of 12.4 years; their total apparent age is 188.6 years, giving an average of 11.7 years; thus they average 0.7 year in underdevelopment; this underdevelopment is estimated at 1 year for 1 girl, and 2 years for 5 girls.

The total actual age for the 37 infected pupils is 442.6 years, giving an average of 11.9 years; the total apparent age is 409.6 years, giving an average of 11.0 years; thus, the total underdevelopment of the 37 infected children is 33 years, or 396 months, giving an average of 0.89 year, or 10.69 months.

Sanitary condition of the homes.—Of the 39 children, 17 pupils, or 43.5 per cent, are living in homes which are not provided with any privy—in other words, they are living on a theoretical maximum of soil pollution; 5 of these 17 children, or 29.3 per cent, report that there has been typhoid fever in their families within the past 10 years. The remaining 22 pupils live on farms with a surface privy open in back; 3 of these children, or 13.6 per cent, report typhoid fever in their families within the past 10 years.

Ground itch.—As some of the children are very young, their testimony as to ground itch is not altogether satisfactory; 19 report having had ground itch, 12 (including the 2 negative cases) deny ground itch, and 8 report that they do not recall whether or not they have had it.

Farm life.—The 37 children infected with hookworm disease have spent their entire life on farms.

The foregoing statistics need not be surprising to any person who has followed the recent work on hookworm disease and who is acquainted with rural sanitation in the South.

The point may be emphasized that the foregoing statements as to underdevelopment and sanitation are based upon local (Virginia) testimony. Our part of the work has been confined to the laboratory examinations.